

Peer, Allie, and Advocates Prevention; Peer Mental Health Advance Directives

Goal:

To develop peer training on psychiatric advance directives so the information is disseminated by peer for peer. It is anticipated this method will increase the number of individuals completing this type of document and help those with lived better voice their choices when hospitalized.

Background

An advance directive can give detailed individual choices for medication, certain types of treatment, hospital admission and who to contact if hospitalized. It can detail preferred medications and treatment modalities. It can also give instructions for address life issues such as taking care of a pet or contacting a landlord or housing provider. Providers have legal obligations to implement PADs under the provisions of the federal Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA, 1990) and as a condition of participation in Medicare and Medicaid programs as well as the Joint Commission.

This document takes effect when a person is found to lack decision-making capacity. Capacity is determined by the treating physician or psychologist and is based on how the person presents at the time of examination. A person may lack capacity when they exhibit extreme acute psychosis, mania, catatonia, delirium, or unconsciousness.

If in a crisis situation and the individual has been found to lack capacity, the PAD goes into effect. During this time the treating medical professionals can refer to the PAD to get the person's choices for treatment, who they want to contact, and how they can be best supported in this situation.

Research

Many studies on Psychiatric Advance Directives have shown that those who developed and unutilized utilized PADs were more likely to report feelings of autonomy, self-determination, and empowerment; less likely to require coercive interventions during mental health crises; and, among those who specified particular medications in their PADs, more likely to adhere to prescribed medications following discharge. Individuals also report having a better working relationship with their clinician, experience fewer coercive crisis interventions, have better adherence to their prescribed medication and increased awareness that their personal needs for mental health services are being met.

A recent study published in 2022 indicated that when peers are involved in the process rather than clinicians or staff individuals are over 47% more likely to complete a PAD and showed a 32% decline in future hospital admissions. This study also showed that PADs facilitated by peer workers were associated with fewer symptoms, higher empowerment, and higher recovery compared to those who were simply given information and left to complete this task on their own (Tinland et al., 2022).

*Tinland A, Loubière S, Mougeot F, Jouet E, Pontier M, Baumstarck K, Loundou A, Franck N, Lançon C, Auquier P; DAiP Group. Effect of Psychiatric Advance Directives Facilitated by Peer Workers on Compulsory Admission Among People With Mental Illness: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2022 Aug 1;79(8):752-759. doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.1627. PMID: 35662314; PMCID: PMC9171654.

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What is an advance directive?

Mental health advance directives are essential legal tools that allow individuals to express their preferences for mental health treatment in advance. These directives ensure that an individual's autonomy is preserved while also ensuring they receive the right care at the right time. They can specify desired treatments, designate decision-makers, and reduce confusion or disagreements among family members and healthcare providers. Psychiatric advance directives (PADs) empower individuals to take an active role in their care, improve communication with providers, and reduce negative coercive treatment experiences.

Why should I develop one?

Psychiatric advance directives (PADs) empower individuals to take an active role in their care, improve communication with providers, and reduce negative coercive treatment experiences. Mental health advance directives are a valuable and important legal tool that can help individuals with mental health issues to direct their care and treatment, even when they are unable to communicate effectively. They provide a way to ensure that healthcare providers and caregivers respect the individual's preferences and avoid confusion or misunderstandings.

Can I get assistance in developing my own Advance Directive?

Peer support workers are individuals who have successfully navigated the mental health system and can offer guidance and support to others going through similar experiences. They can assist in the creation and implementation of a mental health advance directive, ensuring that the individual's preferences are accurately reflected. Peer support workers can also offer emotional support and help individuals build a network of support to aid in their recovery journey. By integrating peer support into the development of mental health advance directives, individuals can have greater control over their care and improve their outcomes.

Where is a good place to store this who should have a copy of my Advance Directive?

It is recommended that a mental health advance directive is shared with their mental health care providers, designated representatives, Peer supporters, family members, and trusted individuals. The way to ensure that healthcare providers, supporters and family respect the individual's preferences and avoid confusion or misunderstandings.

Peer mental health advance directives play a crucial role in ensuring the rights and autonomy of individuals with mental health conditions. These directives allow individuals to articulate their preferences for treatment and support in advance, should they experience a mental health crisis in the future. The directives are typically created by individuals who have lived experience with mental health conditions, known as peers, and can serve as valuable tools for self-determination and empowerment. Here are some reasons why peer mental health advance directives are important in ensuring rights:

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Autonomy and Self-Determination: Peer mental health advance directives empower individuals to make decisions about their own mental health treatment and support. They provide a means for individuals to express their preferences, values, and goals related to their mental health care, ensuring that their wishes are respected and followed even if they are unable to communicate them during a crisis. This promotes autonomy and self-determination, allowing individuals to have a voice in their own treatment and recovery.

Person-Centered Care: Peer mental health advance directives prioritize person-centered care by focusing on the unique needs and preferences of individuals. Peers who have experienced mental health challenges can offer valuable insights into what approaches have worked for them and what types of support have been most beneficial. By documenting their preferences in advance, individuals can guide their treatment providers and ensure that their care aligns with their personal values and recovery goals.

Protection of Rights: Mental health advance directives can help protect individuals' rights by establishing clear guidelines for treatment and intervention. These directives can specify which treatments an individual wishes to receive or avoid, including medications, therapies, hospitalizations, or alternative approaches. By having these preferences documented, individuals can reduce the risk of receiving unwanted or coercive treatments and ensure that their rights are respected even in times of crisis.

Peer Support and Advocacy: The involvement of peers in creating mental health advance directives brings a unique perspective to the process. Peers can provide empathetic support, understanding, and encouragement to individuals navigating the creation of their directives. Peers are often well-versed in mental health systems and can offer guidance on the potential challenges individuals may face and advocate for their rights.

Reducing Coercion and Stigma: Peer mental health advance directives can help reduce coercion and stigma associated with mental health treatment. By clearly articulating treatment preferences and alternative approaches, individuals can advocate for less restrictive and more empowering forms of support. This can challenge the perception that individuals with mental health conditions are incapable of making decisions about their own care and reduce the likelihood of forced treatments or unnecessary hospitalizations.

It is important to note that the availability and legal recognition of peer mental health advance directives may vary across different jurisdictions. However, where recognized and implemented, these directives can be valuable tools in upholding the rights, autonomy, and dignity of individuals with mental health conditions, while promoting person-centered care and recovery-oriented approaches.